

UNITED METHODIST HOUSE NEWS

Box 115 Chautauqua, New York 716 357-2055

Post-Season/September 2009

The United Methodist House in Chautauqua
is open year round for Retreats,
rest and renewal and family gatherings.
For information and reservations
please call 716 357-4045.

=====

the president's message...

SURPRISES

As we entered the 2009 Season, some of us on the Board of Trustees of the United Methodist House had worries about the economy and how we would manage in this difficult time. We worried privately and some expressed publicly their concerns. Considering that for ten years, since we completed the remodeled rooms, we had rented the whole house for the whole Season in about three hours, it was a little alarming that after the first Monday in October 2008, we still had many, many rooms not reserved or paid for. There were three entire weeks that seemed particularly empty!

But, Surprise! By the end of the Season, all but one room in one week had been rented! It was the equivalent of other summers when for one reason or another, we ended up with an unrented room.

Another concern was that our Sunday morning worship offerings might be down due to the economic troubles existing in our country.

Surprise! The Sunday morning offerings were greater than last year! Come to find out that this has also been the experience of many other churches and religious organizations!

We thought that there would have to be many operational "glitches" this summer, given the fact that we had enjoyed such stellar service by Dick and Sally Grove over the previous ten years, and they had "certainly seen it all!" and were old hands at solving any problem that might crop up!

Surprise! Karen and Bob just stepped in and stepped up and we experienced no major problems due to their excellent leadership! They were made to feel warmly welcome by Board Members and "regular renters" and we enjoyed a smooth transition! It was wonderful!

Finally, with each year some Board members leave and others are elected to serve. We worried that the strength and closeness of the Board might be diminished as we bade farewell to valuable and deeply committed persons. Would new persons be as excited and faithful?

Surprise! With the additions of Judy Peterson, Rev. Paul Womack and Rev. Doug Thompson, the Board has already seen the remarkable abilities they bring and I know their devotion to service will only enhance our decision making and times of fellowship. We have also had many others offer their help on various committees and we feel blessed to have their help as well.

Surprise? I don't think so! It's more like answers to prayers! Serving and sharing and experiencing our House is very special indeed. But we're not surprised that it means so much to you, too! Enjoy this beautiful fall season. We look forward to seeing you next summer or if you're lucky, on the porch when the snow falls.

Bob Richards

revrfr@yahoo.com

Greetings from our United Methodist House Couple

When we learned we were invited to come to Chautauqua this summer to serve as the hosts for the United Methodist House, we were thrilled, excited, nervous and "oh so ready" to take on the challenge.

One of the first things done in preparation was to make a card file with an entry for each Board Member and guest who had registered to stay with us. Then, these were just names. Now, at the end of just nine weeks, these unknown folks have become familiar faces, each with a story, each with a smile that has been shared with us and with many. Some of these people have become friends and we love that warm feeling we get when we see them approaching for a visit.

The House is beautiful! It is a joy to share it many times each day with those who stop to meander through our door. We delight in telling visitors about our Board who lovingly and expertly maintain the structure. But, the treasure of the House is the people who do step onto our porch! It is an inviting place to visit, read, share a cookie and coffee, discuss the days lecture or sermon. It is a place where stories are shared, heartaches revealed and connections made. Every day is different; every day an adventure; each day a joy!

We thank each of you for the part you have played in our first season as hosts of this amazing place. We arrived as strangers and leave with hearts overflowing with people and experiences.

There are too many people to thank individually. Janet Fitts has accompanied wonderful musicians each week. Nine groups of ladies from area churches have treated us to bountiful social hours. We have been blessed with ten chaplains who have shared their messages and their time with all of us. Flowers have graced our alter each Sunday. The House is cared for inside and outside with loving hands. The bulletin is prepared, box lunches are packed, popcorn is popped.....it truly is a team effort. To each of you, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of the history of the United Methodist House. Thank you for the amazing opportunity to be part of this beautiful mission of welcome and caring. May God be with each of you till we meet again.

Bob and Karen Douds

The Handicapped Suite

Two brothers, a sister and their spouses wanted to have a family reunion. They searched through lists of resorts, but as grandparents in their late seventies, they did not want to play golf, swim or even hike as one of them used a cane. Tom Wilson thought of the Methodist House at Chautauqua as he and his wife, Connie had stayed there several times through the years and it had a handicapped suite. At the beginning of last year's season, both it and one other room were available! A third room was also needed, so Ed and Jane Wilson stayed in a nearby hotel, while Bill and Jo Fried took the handicapped suite and the Tom Wilson's took the other room at the UM House.

Connie had appreciated the elevator years before when she had had knee surgery, but everyone who has luggage knows and appreciates it when it's time to move in or out! The elevator was a special gift from Esther Salome and one of the most thoughtful ever received! The high ceilings of the first floor make the staircase even higher and those many steps get steeper with our years!

A motor scooter made all of Chautauqua available to Bill while the other five family members got lots of exercise. Handicapped parking spaces just across from the House made getting in and out of the grounds easy for Bill so cinnamon buns were on the menu at Bemus Point, and again, a chicken dinner on Sunday and another dinner lakeside as well as a meal at the United Methodist Church and other Institution spots. Simple meals were possible because of the refrigerator and coffee pot in the room.

Having the Amphitheatre just across the street made hearing many programs possible from the comfort of the rockers on the porch. And other programs right at the House such as the Tuesday Porch Chat with the Chaplain of the Week with a box lunch from Hurlbut United Methodist Church were convenient and enjoyable. There was always fresh coffee and water and many snack and social times as well. Everyone in the family agreed that we would love to do it again!

Connie Wilson

Scholarship Rooms

Each Season, two weeks are set aside for scholarships and are given to persons from W. Pa. and W. NY Conferences. This year, the recipients were so thrilled to have been selected, they wrote the following letters which they have asked that we share.

My wife Susan and I had the privilege of spending a week at Chautauqua from June 27 - July 4, 2009. This was our first opportunity to enjoy the vast array of activities available at Chautauqua Institution. We came away feeling renewed by the stimulating lectures by top notch scholars, the inspirational devotions given daily by the Chaplain of the week, Rev. John Buchanan from Chicago, the fabulous music from the pipe organ in the amphitheatre, plus evening concerts including ballet, tap dancing, Garrison Keillor from Prairie Home Companion, and my personal favorite, the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra performing Holst's "The Planets" and three pieces by Mozart. There were lots of other options besides if you had the time and energy.

Staying at Methodist House was a real treat. Sitting on the porch to chat and make new friends with a cup of coffee or lemonade was refreshing. The Sunday morning worship service in the Methodist House Chapel was followed by the official opening service for everyone in the amphitheater which seats seven thousand. In spite of rain nearly every day, our spirits were never dampened. In such a wonderful environment with arts, education, religion and recreation, we felt truly blessed.

The Chaplain for the week at Methodist House was Rev. David Lake who for a hobby is a beekeeper. He actually brought some bees with him and gave a most fascinating presentation to us on Thursday evening.

Susan and I do appreciate those whose donations to Methodist House at Chautauqua made possible our scholarship that enabled us to stay for an entire week. This is an experience we will never forget. We hope that you will come and experience Chautauqua Institution for yourself and consider a financial donation to help Methodist House founded in 1888 to continue its glorious tradition.

With gratitude,
Ray and Susan Speakman

We will forever remember our experience this past week as guests at the United Methodist House. Angie stayed here a few times before on retreats, but this was our first time together as guests. The programs and worship experiences offered fed both our spirits and our minds. I enjoyed the opening program at the Amphitheatre listening to music idols from my early years--Bobby Rydell, Frankie Avalon and Fabian. Their music brought back many memories from years gone by. My biggest surprise, however, was the program by Garrison Keillor. I was not a big fan of his, and assumed that this was going to be a boring evening. Was I surprised! He kept an overflow audience completely spell-bound with his weaving of music, jokes, and story telling...and in his own special way managed to speak to issues of faith and life that both nurtured my soul and challenged my mind. The lectures on the Gnostic Gospels and the Sesame Street program were both educational and entertaining.

As 'people' we Methodists have always been known for our 'warm hearts and open doors'--and what takes place every day at the United Methodist House is a profound example of who we are. Beginning with our resident hosts, Bob and Karen Douds, our Chaplain the Rev. David Lake and his family and the other 'house guests' we provided holy hospitality to a constant stream of folk who happened to come by each day. The hospitality on the front porch was by far the best Christian witness that we could offer the Chautauqua Community and it's one of the things that makes me proud to be a United Methodist!

With a grateful heart, Rev. Chuch Excell

Childhood Summers Foster Love for Chautauqua

Jerry Siess had no choice about spending his summers at Chautauqua! As a "P.K." he grew up in parsonages in the old Pittsburgh Conference. But each summer, his Mom Charlotte left her husband Edwin ("Doc" to lots of us!) and put the three kids in the old '56 Chevy and drove north to help her Mom and Dad run "The Pearl". At first, eight weeks without TV seemed like real punishment. But then, Jerry and his brother Robert and sister Nancy were enrolled in the Boys and Girls Club and made friends. He and a few other "P.K.s" from other denominations discovered that they had real freedom to go everywhere and anywhere they pleased on their bikes!

While their Mom cooked and cleaned keeping up with the demands of a 19 room house (15 of which were rented out) Jerry had the run of the Institution. When he grew older, he sold newspapers, helped direct traffic in the old parking lot around Norton Hall, swept the Amp at 8 am and helped Mr. Becker in the refectory! He can still chant his newspaper sales call; "2 fat nickles, 1 thin dime, keeps you reading all the time!" He recalls hauling suitcases for all sorts of visitors in his neighborhood for the good tips. And because everyone on the grounds already had their gate tickets, he got to benefit when he started dating. For 10 cents, you could buy an ice cream and you didn't have to worry about purchasing anything else! Those were the good ol' days! When his Dad got an old wooden 12' boat with a 10 hp motor, Jerry thought life couldn't get any better! He and his Lutheran P.K. buddy, "John" spent hours on the water together.

Today, Jerry and his wife Chris, still come and love Chautauqua. The old rooming house was sold years ago, but they keep coming back as often as they can! They're building a new home in Mayville and plan to be on the grounds for years to come.

Jerry never stayed at the United Methodist House, and in fact, until recently thought only the guests who were staying there could use the porch! But interesting connections still are made and new friendships born through the House connection. The Siess' put lots of their furniture into storage while the old house was torn down and the new one built. He offered furniture to the property committee one work party day, but there didn't seem to be a need for the items they had to give. Still, his offer wasn't wasted! In fact, it turned out to be a blessing for a Habitat family in Buffalo, NY. Bruce and Barbara Burr were working with this family and knew they needed "everything!" Nancy and Bob Richards were planning to stay with the Burr's during the Craft Show and knew that their van would be empty with all the seats out and a plywood "floor" placed inside. A few phone calls later, it was all worked out! The Burr's would meet the Siess' at their storage unit with the Richards' van and move all the furniture to Buffalo while Bob and Nancy participated in the craft show. The Habitat family was overjoyed and overwhelmed to be receiving such a generous gift of fine quality furniture, and new friendships were cemented as everyone pitched in to help. The Burr's grandson Peter did lots of the "heavy lifting" and saw first hand what a difference this UMH connection made in the lives of others.

Nancy Richards revrfr@yahoo.com

Communication Committee- United Methodist House Web Site

The Communications Committee has been searching for help with the House's web site for some time. Who knew that the perfect person to help us was one of our "regulars?" Chris Redmond and his wife, Susan, have been staying with us for years! We have come to know and enjoy these Canadian friends but we didn't know how much Chris knew about computers, web sites and how to get us sorted out to have our newsletter available on line as well as how to send and update information about the House, the activities, renting and even pictures of what the rooms are like for first-time visitors. His offer to help has come at a most opportune time. He was good enough to drive back to Chautauqua from Waterloo, Canada, for the end-of-the-Season meeting with chair, Rev. Matt Golibersuch, and things are moving forward. We really are eager for this new technology to be available for your enjoyment and information. Happily, Bob Douds and Karen have been taking digital photos all summer and have made them available to Chris for possible inclusion. It's exciting and we can't wait to see how everything unfolds. We'll keep you posted but hopefully, soon, you'll be able to read this newsletter "on line!"

Nancy Richards revrfr@yahoo.com

A Chaplain's "Chautauqua experience"

"Count Your Blessings"

I recently experienced the blessing of serving as the chaplain of the United Methodist House at the Chautauqua Institution. Being a native of Western New York, I had what I thought was a pretty good working knowledge of what the Chautauqua Institution is and the place of the UM House within it. This was based mostly upon my view from outside of the gate along with various Sunday visits over the years. I was soon to find out that visiting Chautauqua is different that "experiencing" Chautauqua.

My Chautauqua experience began in earnest as soon as my family and I arrived. Like most folks, our lives are lived at a fast-forward pace. Arriving at Chautauqua was akin to hitting a wall. As I dropped our luggage at the house and parked the car, I found myself walking the side streets with a strange companion named Quiet. Quiet was by no means silent. Quiet was such that I actually could discern voices; people having conversations around the table as they dined together. Quiet was such that I heard the birds singing and the clock tower ringing. I was soon to appreciate the presence of Quiet as the week unfolded. It was truly a blessing.

The Chautauqua "experience" could be as much as I wanted it to be or as little as I wanted it to be. The days and nights are filled with opportunities. It was up to me to decide how deeply involved I would get. Day one included the Chautauqua Theater Company's production of Tennessee William's, "The Glass Menagerie." This was followed up by an evening with the Chautauqua Symphony's production of Mahler's "Resurrection." In between, I spent my time greeting people on the porch of the UM House. Talk about being blessed!

As the went on, the blessings continued:

- The preaching of Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie
- An Evening with Ken Burns
- Hall of Philosophy discussions on diplomacy
- North Carolina Dance Theatre Ballet
- Old First Night Celebrations
- The opera Tosca

The greatest blessing of all was meeting and greeting people on the porch of the UM House. Each morning, coffee and tea were available on the porch and many people took advantage of the opportunity to sip a cup and fellowship together. In between classes and performances, people would gather just to sit, talk, read a book, or nap. At the close of the day, people would gather again on the porch for more conversation before turning in for the night. What a blessing it was to take the time to interact with God's people in such a welcoming atmosphere that is conducive to personal interaction.

It was my privilege to serve as chaplain of the UM House and I am truly thankful for the blessing that is the United Methodist House. I have come to appreciate the importance of the denominational houses within the Chautauqua Institution and I look forward to supporting this important ministry in the future.

Rev. Matthew Golibersuch Week 6 Chaplain

The communications committee is working to update the mailing list for our newsletter.

We are asking for the assistance of our members in contacting us should their address change, or requesting to be removed from our mailing list if you are currently receiving this newsletter and no longer have an interest in the House or Chautauqua. We are mailing to 660 addresses currently and seem always to be adding more names! It's costly and wasteful to send mail where it's not needed, so we ask for your help in this matter. On the other hand, if you know of persons who would like to receive this mailings, please let us know about them so they can be added!

Newsletter Mailings The Postal Service has new strict restrictions on having correct addresses for bulk mailing, which is part of its efforts to reduce the undeliverable-as-addressed mail. If we send out a newsletter with a wrong address, we are paying for the postage to mail the newsletter out to you and then we pay the postage to have it returned back to us. Please help the United Methodist House with your correct addresses. Drop us a post card at PO BOX 115, 14 Pratt Ave Chautauqua, New York 14722.

Reservation Information

Reservations for the Chautauqua season may be made by any “member” of the United Methodist House. “Members” are those who have financially contributed to the UM House in the past year...or those who are United Methodists. Reservations for the Retreat season can be made any time throughout the year. Reservations for the Chautauqua Season can only be made by calling (716) 357-4045 after 9 am on the first Monday of October for members of the United Methodist Church / or United Methodist House and after 9 am on the first Tuesday of October for everyone. The reservations will be taken over the phone, on a first come – first served basis. Messages for reservations will not be accepted. The United Methodist House has 5 rooms to rent each week of the Chautauqua Season. Four rooms accommodate 2 people in twin beds. One room (the Wesley Suite) accommodates 4 people in twin beds. For the Retreat Season the House rents 7 rooms and is available for weekend or mid week rentals by individuals or churches. Like all fine historic accommodations, the UM House is 100% non-smoking! Only "seeing eye" pets are allowed. Like all United Methodist facilities alcoholic beverages are prohibited.

Please take Note! Reservations for the 2010 Chautauqua Season at the United Methodist House will be taken over the phone starting at 9:00 am on Monday October 5, 2009....for United Methodists or members of the United Methodist House. 716 357-4045

United Methodist House Room Reservation Procedure

1. Seasonal Reservations will be taken by phone beginning the first in October for members of the UM Church and UM House and beginning the first Tuesday in October for all others. Deposit will be expected by November 1.
2. Persons may make reservations for only one or two weeks. After November 1, if space is available, persons may reserve additional weeks. A week in the summer is considered Saturday - Saturday.
3. A deposit of \$200 for each seasonal rental, is due by November 1. Full payment is expected by April 1. If no deposit has been received...by November 1.... room will be considered available for next possible renter. Refunds for cancellations will only be made if the rooms are rebooked.
4. Off-Season Rental rates must be paid in full before use. A \$100 deposit will be required within a month of making the reservation. In case of a cancellation, the \$100 deposit will be returned only if the space is filled.
5. Space for Churches holding programs in the UM House during the season, may be reserved at no charge....in consultation with the Host Couple.
6. Reservations for Off-Season Rentals are invited at any time and up to 24 months in advance by calling Hurlbut Church..
7. Reservations may be made by calling Hurlbut Memorial Community United Methodist Church at 716 357-4045.

United Methodist House Room Rental Rates

in effect until September 1, 2010

Seasonal

And the week before and the week after

Boehm Room	\$ 525.	per week
All Other Rooms	\$ 625.	per week
Wesley Suite	\$1250.	per week

Rentals to Church Groups Any time except during Season

Retreat Season

For the entire UM House	\$425	rates reflect 2 night stays
	\$ 55	per day...day use only

Rentals to non-Church Groups Any time except during Season

For the entire UM House	\$600	per weekend	Friday-Sunday	for any 2 night stay
-------------------------	-------	-------------	---------------	----------------------

The United Methodist House at Chautauqua

A year around center for retreats and renewal at Chautauqua

Offering a positive radiant expression of United Methodist Christianity.

Providing for spiritual refreshment, quiet renewal, friendship and fellowship!

The United Methodist House is centrally located at the heart of the Chautauqua experience! The United Methodist House is available year-round for church and family groups! Reservations for the Retreat Season (September - May) are taken at any time. Reservations for the Chautauqua Season (end of June - August) are available starting on the first Monday of October of the previous year. For information and reservations call 716 357-4045.